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Your Magazine of Choice

Dec 2003/Jan 2004, Vol. 11 Number 4

Fight
for
Your
Rights

Pg 9

Fun

Pg's 8, 13, 26

Identity

Pg's 17, 22, 30

Health

Pg's 4, 14, 16

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***Message from the Honourable Anne McLellan
Member of Parliament for Edmonton West***

It is my pleasure to extend holiday greetings to the readers of Times.10 magazine. As we approach the holidays, our thoughts turn to good friends and the experiences we have shared. Throughout the past year Canadians have engaged in a discussion of some very important issues, many of which are of particular interest to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered community.

In September, the House of Commons adopted bill C-250, which relates to hate propaganda and sexual orientation. Draft legislation to recognize the union of same-sex couples has been referred to the Supreme Court to ensure its constitutionality. Recently, legislation has been proposed which would enable the supply of inexpensive drugs to developing countries to help fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for letting me know your views. As Member of Parliament for Edmonton West I very much value your opinions and thoughts. I look forward to meeting many of you again in the new year as we enter an exciting time in Canadian politics.

Please accept my best wishes for the holidays and for health and happiness throughout the year.

Yours truly,

A. Anne McLellan





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Iraq's Real WMD Crime

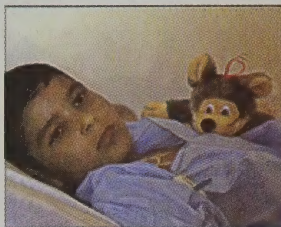
*By Lawrence Smallman in
Baghdad*

There are weapons of mass destruction all over Iraq and they were used this year. Iraqi children continue to find them every day. They have ruined the lives of just fewer than 300,000 people during the last decade - and numbers will increase. The reason is simple. Two hundred tonnes of radioactive material were fired by invading US forces into buildings, homes, streets and gardens all over Baghdad. The material in question is depleted uranium (DU). Left over after natural uranium has been enriched, DU is 1.7 times denser than lead effective in penetrating armoured objects such as tanks. After a DU-coated shell strikes, it goes straight through before exploding into a burning vapour, which turns to dust. "Depleted uranium has a half life of 4.7 billion years - that means thousands upon thousands of Iraqi children will suffer for tens of thousands of years to come. This is what I call terrorism," says Dr Ahmad Hardan.

As a special scientific adviser to the World Health Organisation, the

United Nations and the Iraqi Ministry of Health, Dr Hardan is the man who documented the effects of depleted uranium in Iraq between 1991 and 2002. But this year's invasion and occupation has doubled his workload.

American forces admit to using over 300 tonnes of depleted uranium in 1991. The actual figure is closer to 800. "This has caused a health crisis that has affected almost a third of a million people "Dr Ahmad Hardan, scientific adviser to the World Health Organisation "This has caused a health crisis that has affected almost a third of a million people. As if that was not enough, America went on and used 200 tonnes more in Baghdad alone this April. I don't know about other parts of Iraq, it will take me years to document that." Hardan is particularly angry because he says there



is no need for this type of weapon US conventional weapons are quite capable of destroying tanks and buildings.

"In Basra, it took us two years to obtain conclusive proof of what DU does, but we now know what to look for and the results are terrifying." Leukaemia has already become the most common type of cancer in Iraq among all age groups, but is most prevalent in the under-15 category. It has increased way above the percentage of population growth in every single province of Iraq without exception. Women as young as 35, are developing breast cancer. Sterility among men has increased tenfold.

Barely human but by far the most devastating effect is on unborn children. Nothing can prepare anyone

for the sight of hundreds of preserved foetuses barely human in appearance. Depleted uranium has caused severe deformities in babies there is no doubt that DU is to blame. "All children with congenital anomalies are subjected to karyotyping and chromosomal studies with complete genetic back-grounding and clinical assessment. Family and obstetrical histories are taken too. These international studies have produced ample evidence to show that DU has disastrous consequences."

Not only are there 200 tonnes of uranium lying around in Baghdad, the containers that carried the ammunition were discarded. For months afterwards, many used them to carry water – others used them to sell milk publicly. It is already too late to reverse the effects.

After his experience in Basra, Hardan says that within the next two years he expects to see significant rises in congenital cataracts, anophthalmia, microphthalmia, corneal opacities and coloboma of the iris and that is just in people's eyes. Add to these foetal deformities, sterility in both sexes, an increase in miscarriages and premature births,

congenital malformations, additional abnormal organs, hydrocephaly, anencephaly and delayed growth. Soaring cancer rates" I had hoped the lessons of using DU would



have been learnt especially as it is affecting American and British troops stationed in Iraq as we speak, they are not immune to its effects either."

Many affected foetuses are so deformed they cannot survive. If the experience of Basra is played out in the rest of the country, Iraq is looking at an increase of more than 300% in all types of cancer over the next decade. The signs are already here in Baghdad – the effects are starting to be seen. Every form of cancer has jumped up at least 10% with the exception of bone tumours and skin cancer, which have only risen 2.6% and 9.3% respectively.



Another tragic outcome is the delayed growth of children. Skeletal age comparisons between boys from southern Iraq and boys from Michigan show Iraqi males are 26 months behind in their development by the time they are 12-years-old and girls are almost half a year behind." The effects of ionising radiation on growth and development are especially significant in the prenatal child", adds Dr Hardan.

"Embryonic development is especially affected." Action needed those who have seen the effects of DU hope the US and its allies will never use these

from Japan's Hiroshima hospital to come and share their expertise in the radiological related diseases we are likely to face over time," says Hardan. "The delegation told me the Americans had objected and they had decided not to come." Similarly, a world famous German cancer specialist agreed to come, only to be told later that he would not be given permission to enter Iraq."

Moreover, Hardan believes the authorities need to produce precise information about what was used and where, and there needs to be a clean-up operation and centres for specialist cancer treatment and radiation-related illnesses. Iraq only

has two hospitals that specialise in D U - related illnesses, one in Basra and one in Mawsil – this needs to change and soon." I'm fed up of delegations coming and weeping as I show them children dying before their eyes. I want action and not emotion.

The crime has been committed and documented but we must act now to Save our children's future."

(Courtesy of Aljazeera News Net)

weapons again but it seems no such decision is likely in the foreseeable future." A world famous German cancer specialist agreed to come, only to be told later that he would not be given permission to enter Iraq" Dr Ahmad Hardan, scientific adviser to the World Health Organisation, "I arranged for a delegation

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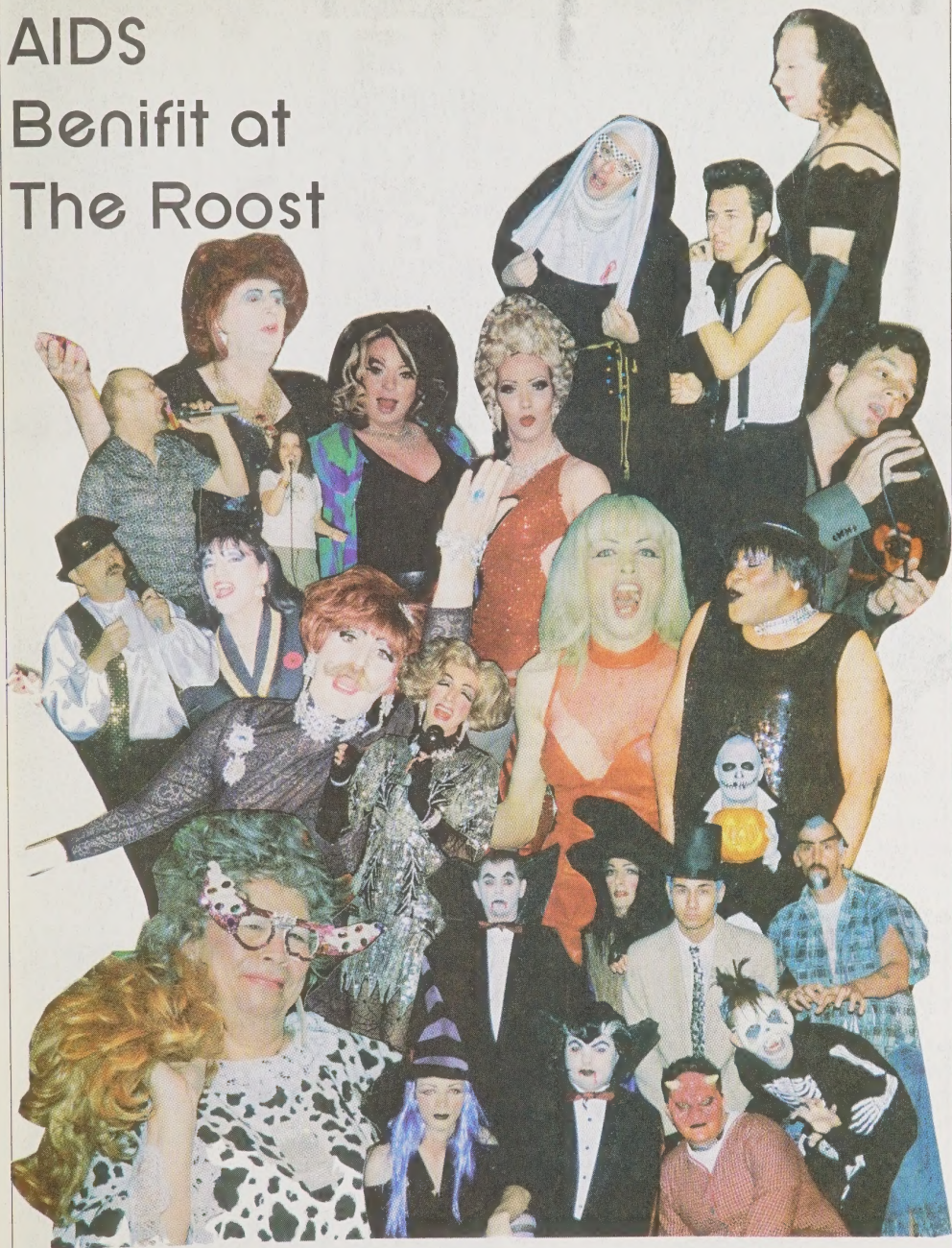


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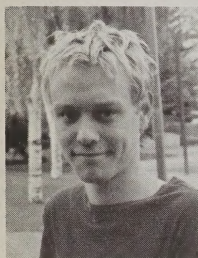
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Fight for Your Rights

I was not alive to witness first hand the civil rights movement or the Women's rights



movement or when people stood against the unjust war in Vietnam. I do however admire those people so much. What it would have been like to believe in something so much, and know what your

government is doing and the way it's citizens are being treated is so wrong. That you take to the streets, and let your voice be heard, if only influencing a few people at first, you are satisfied knowing that the snowball has started and it will only continue to grow.

What happened to that drive that ambition those feelings they must still be there as it comes up in conversation all the time. I don't think a day goes by when I don't hear someone talking about Bill Smiths smoking bylaw or just talking trash about Ralph Klein, or someone being totally and utterly appalled by the Bush administrations occupation of Iraq. So if people are always talking about it, why are things not being changed? Every time that we let these things slide we just make it easier for them to control our lives and

do what ever they please without the support of the people.

In Alberta it seems almost pointless to be out in the streets and at the steps of the legislature standing up for what we know is right. We live in a province ruled by a majority government that doesn't care about human rights or the welfare of its citizens.

This is proven all the time. When the King Ralph government decided to introduce Bill 11, (a bill to make way for private hospitals.) Thousands of Albertans took to the steps of the legislative building; there was a rally at the agricom, which had an attendance of over six thousand people. Doctors came from all around the world to warn the people of Alberta that they had tried this in other countries and it does not work. Even Kiefer Sutherland came to speak. Even after all of these efforts the bill was still passed. Today with same-sex marriage sweeping across the nation Mr. Klein still threatens to use the notwithstanding clause. Even though the majority support or know that same-sex marriage will have no bearing on their lives, but heaven forbid that Klein listen to the people by which he was elected.

As adults we make the decision as to where we go out to eat, or which bar or lounge we choose to sit back relax and unwind in with our friends. As a smoker this choice is slowly being ripped from under our feet. Sure I agree that I should not be able to smoke where unwilling children are in the room. If I am in a house with children I go outside or into another

room because they only have the choice of what is put out in front of them. As for us adults we do have a choice, as should business owners have the choice of whether or not to allow smoking in their establishment. There will always be non-smoking environments for people to go and enjoy themselves in. In 2005 there will be no more choice for the smoker, we will be forced to go out in the frigid cold or just stay home, rather than be allowed to enjoy a smoke and a drink out with our friends.

There is something we can do though. We can call city council and tell them that we are not in favour of having our freedom that was fought so hard for in WW2 to free the world of such an evil dictator like Hitler only to have our freedoms taking away again by our own governments. If the phone calls don't work, there is an election coming up and I for one will not vote for anyone who supports such a law.

We must stand up and fight for what we know is right. We must not let them control us like a puppet on a string. This is our city, our country and our planet. It is time to learn from the people in our past that fought so hard to get us where we are today.

Those people should never be forgotten, and let us never forget that we are the ones in control, we will no longer stand around and have our lives ran for us.

We will fight!

By Steve Townsend,
Assistant Editor

*Edmontons Largest
Collection of Gay
and Lesbian
Periodicals*

From Around The World!

*Come, Check-out
the Collection*

Birks Building

The Front Page
10356 Jasper ave 426-1206

My Wish List

By Laurie Blakman
MLA



With the holiday season upon us, I thought I would share with you my wishes (in no particular order) for Alberta this Christmas.

Wish #1

A new sweater for everyone... I wish this government would pull the plug on electrical deregulation! Right now, it's an unworkable mess and it is seniors and low-income Albertans who are being hurt by outrageous energy bills

Wish #2

I wish 'Queer Eye for the Straight Guy' would call the Dome, this government desperately needs a makeover. The homophobia you see there is hopelessly out of date, highly unattractive and really, kind of embarrassing.

Wish #3

Like a driver waiting for affordable insurance, I yearn for the return of democracy in Alberta! I wish the government bullies in the Assembly would fully debate bills and act in a respectful manner. Their cavalier attitude in the House and stifling of debate as they ram through legislation is shameful.

Wish #4

I wish a Happy Retirement to the Tory MLAs who refuse to put *people before profits* when it comes to the Insurance Industry. We need Public Auto Insurance to fight the skyrocketing costs that we're all facing.

Wish #5

Is there a wizard somewhere to help the Tory MLAs from Edmonton stand up and speak on behalf of their constituents? Precious few of them ever get up in the House, so I wish Dorothy and that lion could give them some pointers on bravery.

Wish #6

I wish there were *no health care premiums* for Senior Citizens, students and low-income earners. The steady rise in premiums and the decline in the number of people who qualify for subsidies have meant a growing number of people are forced to pay user fees for health care that they cannot afford.

Wish #7

I had hoped post-secondary students wouldn't end up with coal in their stockings this session. Minister Lyle Oberg's proposal to remove the tuition cap is the ultimate betrayal of our young people. And I'm not even going to mention the class-size issue in primary and secondary schools....

Wish #8

I wish the provincial government would review the apprenticeship board and bring it up to date. The apprenticeship program is not working for many of the trades and we're suffering a shortage of skilled workers in many areas. The province needs to address this issue and pronto.

Wish #9

Like a patient waiting for a hip replacement, I ache for a commitment to an appropriately-funded public health care system. I wish we could implement MLA Kevin Taft's Alberta Liberal Health Care plan so that all government policy decisions

would undergo a health care impact assessment.

Wish #10

I wish all the homeless people had houses. I bet they wouldn't charge Stan Woloshyn a user-fee to visit.

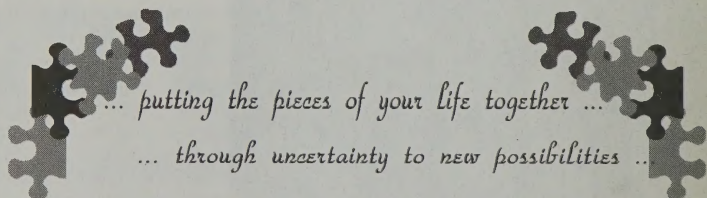
Wish #11

What's that song about 'maids-a-milking'? I wish for a lobbyist registry. I want to know which companies and organizations are paying to get the tea, I mean, ear of the government - and why.

Wish #12

I wish for you a wonderful, peaceful holiday season and a healthy and happy new year. Thank you for allowing me to be your voice in the provincial legislature.

If you have a particular issue and would like to be on an email list for me to send you copies of questions asked in Question Period, please send me your email address and let me know whether you are a constituent or where in Alberta you live. You can reach me at my new email address or call (780) 414-0743 or drop by #3, 9908-109 Street, Edmonton, AB. T5K 1H5.



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Too Many Zits

By Dennis Cambly
Managing Editor

So the pimples are beginning to pop on the face of the reeformed Alliance party? Is it not the same old face that was so covered in pimples during the last Federal Election? Is just gets uglier if that is possible. Now the true party policies on minorities are popping up all over just like a zit when it is popped and hits the mirror. In fact nothing much has changed since the

time of Stockwell Day who announced that man walked with the dinosaurs... duh! He represents most of the members of the reformed alliance and now maybe the conservative party. He brings his Episcopal background right into the secular democracy that figures the church should run our lives. We know that Klein, our fearless leader who never has to account for the billions of surplus dollars, is a good buddy of Stockwell and crew. Klein is still lead around by the sickening tiny faction of our society that would have us riding horse and buggies and teaching that ancient writings are in fact the only truth. What a load of pure poison for our society.

Let me give you a very good example of how the church

can cause hundreds of thousands, if not millions of deaths by their teachings. In the early part of the eighties and unknown disease was hitting the gay community in North America. Day after day we listened to the "born again" (I think they died and went to hell) preachers on radio and television making charges that it was their god's wrath on our community. Their ignorance was so out of touch that the disease was running out of control on other continents. Millions of people would die and due to the "born again" backing of the U.S. President Reagan who would not even mention the word AIDS until his 6th year as President. It was okay though because it was their god's will. The supposed leader of the Catholic Church ran around the globe telling everyone that the use of condoms was, and still is, forbidden.

If the scientific community that works to discover new truths, had been given the green light, to find either a vaccine or cure things may have changed. It would be in your best interest to rent a copy of the movie "And the Band Played On" for a brief look at the early days of what would become a worldwide epidemic. There must be at least twenty well know Hollywood names featured in the movie. For so many years the "born against" called it the gay plaque or gay cancer. The truth is that every one of them was wrong. Pure and

simple everything they preach is wrong. Poor Moses with that great mob running around in the desert had to make laws for them to try and keep them in line. It is pathetic that people attempt in any way to enforce those same laws on society today.

Today we have 40 to 50 million people that we know of that have HIV or AIDS. We have no idea how many people are walking around with the virus and do not know it because they have never been tested. The number could easily double if we knew the truth.

Is there any compassion or empathy within the ranks of the alliance or conservative party for the dead or dying? Not one tear will fall, but



we have been given the chance to see the zits begin to splatter. The far right wing leftovers mostly from Alberta can put a new face forward or change their name, but the fact is eventually the face full of zits will show. It is ugliness in its purest form known to a modern democracy in a secular state.

So watch out when they walk passed you that some of that puss does not get on your skin, it is toxic!

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Bring on the nightmare

In the last couple of months, since the last column, The ISCWR has gone into full swing. At the end of September, Investitures was held at Prism. Emperor 26, Rob, was appointed to be Regent Emperor, to assist Empress 28, Oprah throughout the year. Kitten Kaboodle was elected Imperial Crown Princess, and Steve and Sticky Vicky were selected to be Imperial Grand Duke and Duchess. This formed the Upper House for the 28th reign.

In October, the Court participated in Edmonton's coats for kids campaign, collecting many coats from

throughout our community. Thank you to all of those who helped out. Empress Oprah attended fundraisers put on by Outreach at the U of A, and Woody's Pub, as well as hosting her own fundraising shows, women of rock, and women of soul, at Prism. Watch for more in a series of "women of shows yet to come, at Prism's new location, 10524-101st."

Rob and Oprah, along with several court members, took part in the Roosts 20th annual Aids benefit on November 10th. As always, it was a great event with fabulous entertainment.

Besides those events, the Court also puts on 2 weekly events. Wingo bingo is held every Wednesday at Boots at 9pm. We have fun prizes up for grabs, as well as a cash jackpot, currently at over \$500.00. The Garage has 25-cent wings, which come with free game cards for the "wingo" round. On Friday nights, Rob and Oprah have 50/50 draws and prize raffles at the Roost. Tickets are drawn after the strippers.



The Court is proud to be a part of the Roost's production of A Nightmare before Christmas. It will be showing on December 2, 4, 5, 9, 11 & 12 at 11pm upstairs at the Roost. This will be a show not to miss! The Roost will be donating all proceeds to children's charities.

Other upcoming events include Empress 26, Ida Clair's Ms. Mary Christmas Pageant at Boots on December 20th, and the 3rd annual Ms Drag Queen Edmonton Pageant, also at Boots, at the end of January. If you would like more information about our Organization and

events, please visit our website at www.geocities.com/wildrosecourt

On behalf of the ISCWR, I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Emperor 27, Bobby



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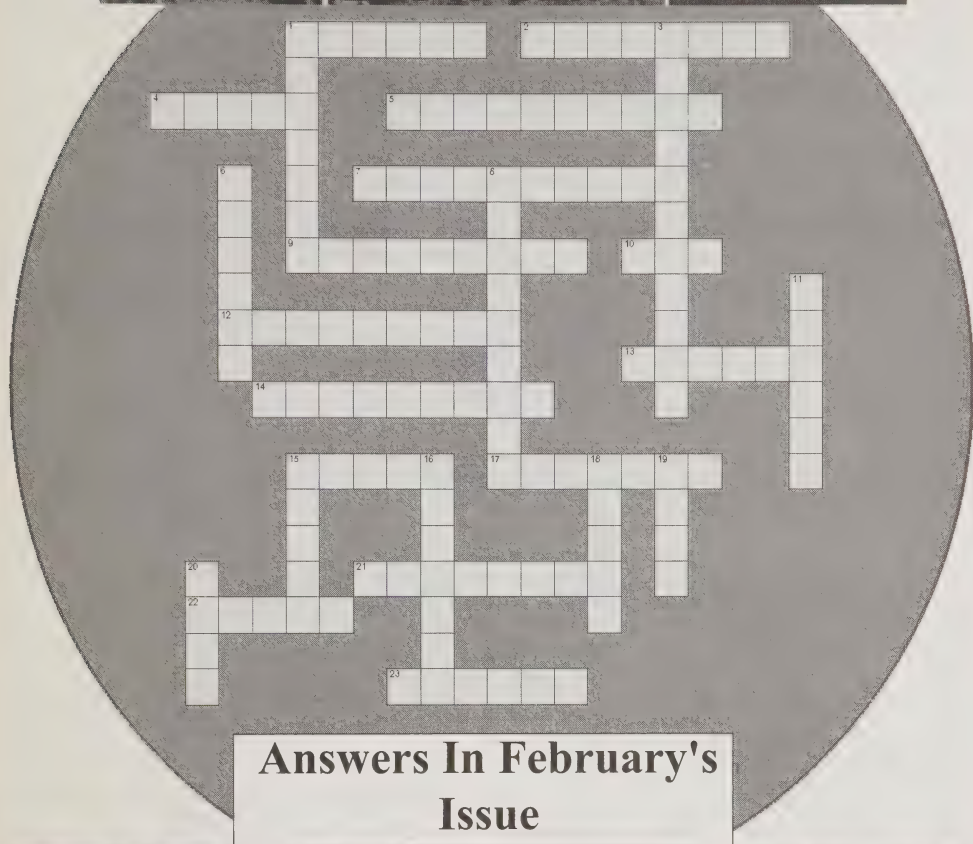
Rea Jansen, Agent

creative home transitions

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Answers In February's Issue

Across

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Speaking of "Normal"

**By Elizabeth Massiah,
MSW, RSW
Clinical Social Worker**

Well, it's Christmas again, almost. It was quite the year, all round. What with war, marriage debates, dead soldiers, Romeo D'Allaire's book on his work in Rwanda, aptly titled, "Shake Hands with the Devil", Alliance MP's outdoing themselves in hatred demonstrations, with a close second going to David Kilgour. Huge changes in politics and yet lots are the same.

Rather than focus on these nasties, this column with be about two recent incidents of hope in my life.

There are still those that believe in hope and respect. In not calling one another names, regardless of what we think of their views or politics. Of remembering that people and their beliefs are different, and we can be critical of a person's actions without having to attack their character. In remembering that positive change is possible, that hope keeps us going.

At lunch the other day, my friend was updating me on the work her daughter is doing in India, running a school for kids that would not otherwise be able to get an education. And how the adults who are helping at the school are also learning to read and write. My friend said that her daughter sometimes wonders if it's worth all the hard work, if it will make a difference, really. And

we decided that of course it would, that every little speck of hope helps.

A few weeks ago, my spouse and I went for dinner to an Eritrean restaurant — remember Eritrea is in Africa. The owner, having come to Canada because of the wars and political unrest, runs a day care and this restaurant. We ate "African", meaning with our hands. Great food, humble little place.

When the owner offered coffee, we accepted. She asked us to move over to a certain area, and I noticed her asking other patrons to join us. We were a bit puzzled, but as good Canadians, went along with her. Well, her "mother", a good friend, was making coffee for us the traditional way —roasting the beans, grinding them, and putting them through the water three times. We patrons, got to watch and visit. As happens in villages throughout the world, people gather for a drink and the news. We started to chat with these total strangers, at first awkwardly, then more easily. The owner would chat in Eritrean with her "mother". Mebrat, the owner/daughter told us with pride that the mother speaks five distinct languages and dialects, as well as English.

At one point these two got into a difference of opinion over some part of the coffee making. The mother was very precise about the process, doing it just so, and was not about to be rushed, by anyone. We did not need to know the language to understand the conversation. The mother, one of those large, intensely goddess like

women, rose up in her seat and put her hand on her hip, quite indigently. The universal language was fabulous. We realized she had had enough of the debate. She was going to do what she thought was correct and this youngster should just take note. No one needed an interpreter; we all remembered that intensely female gesture from our own lives. She had big, solid hips, and the hand on them was solid and yet so gentle. We laughed and kidded the owner about her apparent misdeed.

We were connecting as humans, in universal understandings. The youngsters were reminded to respect the wisdom of the elders. The coffee was unbelievable and we stayed and stayed, drinking it out of tiny cups. We joked with the owner that she should run a video store on the side, since she could fill folks up with coffee

and then they would have to rent videos, cause they'd be up all night. Great joke and not a bad idea. But only videos about hope and laughter.

Eventually the mother announced she had not had dinner, kidding the owner about mistreating her. It was late, the coffee was almost gone, and we slowly took our leave.

That evening will be a sparkling memory for the rest of my life. The restaurant is the Mabret's on 107 Ave at 106 St. Have a good holiday season and remember that all that really matters in our lives is love, laughter and sharing our humanity together.

The opinions expressed in the column are those of the author alone. They are not meant to replace consultation with a qualified professional psychotherapist. Any client related information is altered to protect identity.

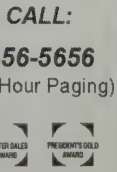
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Edmonton Pride Week Society

Next Annual General Meeting:

**Tuesday December 9th
7:30 PM**

#45, 9912-106 Street



Protest And Civil Action

What: A Community Protest and Demonstration to raise awareness about the firing of Matthew Cusick, a Cirque du Soleil employee who was illegally fired from his job for having HIV disease.

Visual: Silent clowns dressed in black will line up along the main entrance of the circus tent. They will pass out red balloons for people to carry inside to show their support of the protest.

Where: Staples Center - directly outside the Main Tent/Main Entrance

When: Sunday, Nov 23, 12 noon

Who: Invited Guests Include: peaceful protestors dressed as "silenced" clowns (excellent photo opportunity); Members of Being Alive/People with AIDS Action Coalition; Jon Davidson - Lambda Legal Defence and Education Fund; legal representative of Matthew Cusick;

Michael O'Conner, HIV/AIDS Legal Services Alliance; LA City Councilmember Jan Perry; Assembly member Paul Koretz; TV personality Jim J. Bullock Brad Sears, chairman of the Board of Directors for Being Alive said, "the clowns at this circus appear to have taken over the HR department. We have to take a stand against this unlawful and unnecessary firing. Mathew Cusick poses no threat to his co-workers or spectators at Cirque du Soleil. It is disappointing

that two decades into the AIDS epidemic employment decisions are based on irrational fear instead of medical knowledge. Being Alive and other groups will protest Cirque performances throughout the United States until Matthew is re-hired and Cirque adopts a non-discriminatory employment policy." For more background information on this case be go to www.lambdalegal.org

HIV infection Rates in Alberta gay/ bisexual/ MSM Rising.

Robert Wm. Smith
HIV Edmonton

"It's all fun and games until someone loses an eye", an old adage yet a hard hitting message with a dash of country lore. The fun we seek, the pleasures we experience, the moments of resignation we allow, can cost us an eye. Worse, it still holds 21 years later; it could cost us a life. And it has.

The September 2003 HIV/AIDS stats from Alberta Health and Wellness released by Dr. Ameeta Singh, our Infectious Disease Consultant, gives the alarming revelation that gay/bisexual/MSM are leading the numbers of newly diagnosed HIV infected; 55% of all new infections in the 9 month period from January 1st, 2003, in fact. The figures come from the whole province of Alberta; however, most of the men in this group do conduct at least part of their lives in Edmonton and Calgary for a good percentage of their gay experiences, you know, in pursuit of social and sexual interaction.

Here's the kicker! A startling and disturbing tidbit in these recent stats is that 37% of those 16 Times.10 Magazine, Dec 2003 / Jan 2004

newly infected were between the ages of 30 and 39 years old, and 36% between the ages of 40 and 59. Our youth are not out of the water here; they comprise the other 27% of that original 55. What's it all about?

I am going to make some assumptions. From the information I have researched, the rise in stats is multi-layered and interwoven with the history and the human need of our sexual experiences. Beginning with the 40 - 59 year old age group, one theory is that these infections are actually older and not as a result of recent encounters. This would imply that many more have been infected in the interim. Not a pleasant thought but a real one.

It is also likely that older gay/bisexual/MSM men are getting pretty blasé about sexual risk taking in favour of just experiencing sexual fulfillment. Its what guys do, they either deposit or they enjoy receiving semen. It's a bit of a principle of manhood. Unfortunately, our friends are dying and guys who have sex with men have had 21 years of hearing how dangerous it is out there. What does it take to experience a little trust without fear of being left dying as a consequence?

Given that those 30 - 39 years of age have had little licence to enjoy their full sexuality without condoms and given that the 30 year old was 9 and the 39 year old just hitting his adolescent sexual prime, "sexual safety" should be foremost in their minds. Obviously, in the past couple of years it seems not to be.

And third on my list, the young guys have this genetically installed "invulnerable" contract with life that keeps them from it. But it's not

simple. Young guys are at risk as well, some as a result of their relationships with older men and trading off their own safety for economic security, sometimes trusting the older person to have their interests at heart.

Older guys who actually experienced the fulfillment of sexual activity before HIV are tired and frustrated by this thing. And who can blame them? Heterosexual married men for example, get to deposit their seed any time they want; and in some cases, anywhere they want. HIV isn't theirs or so they think. But in the last 21 years, what sexual fulfillment is there for a guy who just wants to have the same experience with another guy outside of a "monogamous" relationship. None, that is, none if you aren't playing Russian roulette. That's not a justification by any means, what should be easily understood is that men are born with a biological reality, we produce semen, and just sometimes, we'd love to fulfill it confidently.

The reality is HIV is alive among us; and the fact is if you are not in a one on one with another like-minded individual, you could be added to next years top ten infections list. I am confident that the majority, the greater majority of you know how to prevent that.

One way of knowing for certain what is going on in your body is to go for a complete STI testing, including HIV. Don't give it all over to chance. Testing in Edmonton is free and anonymous at the Capital Health STD Centre at 11111 Jasper Avenue, in the old General Hospital (east entrance off old emergency). The nurses there are great and

won't pressure you into bearing your soul. (A wee testing stat; over 50% of all STI/HIV tests performed in recent months at the STD Centre were on folk who did not know the name of their last partner.)

World AIDS Day is past. We can tuck away another campaign. What we shouldn't tuck away is the realization that if we don't get a handle on HIV, even if it appears that the numbers are inconsequential compared to Africa, we could easily and quickly suffers a similar devastation. Shutting HIV out of your life and denying our own vulnerability will not make it go away.

And, more bad news; the promise of vaccines, one that has been repeated three times since 1986, is still 10 years away. That is somewhat removed from the sexual encounter you hope to have in the immediate future. In fact, the only phase 3 trial (the phase that enlists the help of literally thousands of people in a cohort) of an HIV vaccine, in Thailand, has recently failed. It's not all bleak, there are people, lots of people working on it, but vaccines are not going to appear tomorrow. Testing alone takes many years.

Microbicides or substances that can be inserted anally or vaginally are having a much more successful run. There are several in various stages of testing and surprisingly, the one closest to completion is Carraguard, a derivative of seaweed. Carraguard is being tested as a coating of the lining of the rectum that prevents the HIV virus from contacting the inner body. Maybe we can find another use for ice cream.

Let me end this rant by wishing all a warm and comfortable winter. May the blessing of the season be upon you? Keep yourselves safe. Snowballs can take out an eye, and, HIV can take out a life.

Coming Out

By Robbie Telenko

I started my coming out journey approximately 20 years ago; I call it a journey because I believe I will be coming out for the rest of my life, though there is one moment in life that you realize you're gay. The following story is about my moment.

My first if you can call it "gay experience", was with one of my best friends, I was about 12 years old, and he was of the same age. I cannot really remember, when it was that we decided to

"play", but some how we thought we should experiment. Our "experimentation" went on for almost 3 years, until his family was moving from our rental community. I was truly distraught, I had such deep feelings for him, and these weren't best friend moving away feelings. This was the first time I knew I was different and I couldn't put a name to myself or how I felt. I did not know the word gay yet, or that it applied to me.

Almost 16 years past, and I began to realize, by self-education... I was gay. I did not admit it to myself until I got a computer, and started chatting on local

area bulletin boards. This was how I met my first actual boyfriend. My best friend Maggie would come over and we would chat with him. Then came the day to meet. Maggie did not know that it was a date, so I pulled all the courage I could find and decided that she would be the first person I was going to tell, the first time I would say it out loud. While sitting there one night before "the date", I told Maggie that there was something I had to say. She gave me this approving smile, and with the brief anticipation I said it... "Maggie I'm gay". After the hugs and tears on both sides she said she had been waiting a long time for me to tell

her, and that she already knew.

This was the moment in my life I knew I was gay. I had this utter heartfelt feeling of relief, sense of belonging, sense of inner peace, and yet afraid of what was to come. All the messed up thoughts in my head made sense. All the broken pieces fit, all the looks I gave to guys, all the times my straight friends caught me looking, all the flirting that I never knew I was doing, all the times I wished I could tell people and all the times I thought less of myself for feeling different, all the hiding was over. I could now be me.

My journey continues...

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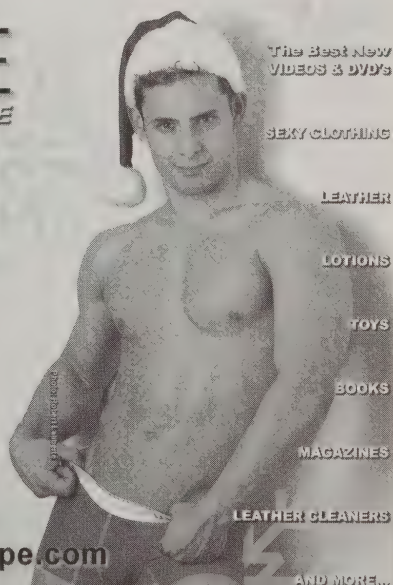
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Future Looks Bleak for GLCCE

By Tamsin Bohnet

The Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton is facing a difficult time in its long history of service to the Edmonton community. Despite its ongoing campaign to raise money and recruit volunteers, GLCCE has not received the community support it was counting on.

GLCCE's services include a drop-in centre, resource library with Internet access, peer support sessions, coming out groups for men and women, and meeting space for various community groups. Funding and volunteer shortages have made maintaining these programs and services increasingly difficult.

In order to keep the centre open and continue providing outreach services, GLCCE had hoped to meet four objectives by December 31 of this year: to raise \$10 000 in donations, to receive

pledges for 2004 to help meet the \$50 000 annual operating costs, to recruit another 40 hours per month of new volunteer time, and to fill board and committee vacancies.

So far, the response has fallen far short these goals in terms of both financial and volunteer contributions, and no new board candidates have come forward to fill upcoming vacancies. "We want to thank all those who have contributed funds and volunteer time during our current campaign," says co-chair Steve Rowan, "but we simply haven't had the response we were hoping for from the community."

In addition to its funding and volunteer issues, GLCCE is also facing the loss of its current staff. GLCCE hopes to be hiring

a part-time staff member to keep the centre running for the next two months but time and energy are in short supply. "We're looking for a motivated, independent person to join our staff for the months of December and January," says Rowan. "The position is for fifteen to twenty hours a week including occasional evening and weekend hours, and the major duties are limited to helping the organization reach its short-term goals of fundraising and building our volunteer base, keeping doors open during posted office hours, answering and redirecting phone, email and mail messages, basic office administration duties, coordination or volunteers' schedules and duties, and working with the board to prepare for the AGM planned for late January. Interested applicants

should send their resumes to the GLCCE office via mail or e-mail.

Faced with these difficult realities, GLCCE will be holding a special general meeting to explain the situation, review the campaign's progress, and discuss options for GLCCE's future, including closing its doors. Rowan encourages community members and supporters to attend the meeting and be part of the decision making process. Co-Chair Roz Ostendorf also hopes that people will step forward with donations and commitments of volunteer time to help keep the centre open. Without this support, both co-chairs and other board members have expressed grave concerns regarding the future of GLCCE.



EDMONTON-CENTRE

Laurie Blakeman, MLA

Happy Holidays!

#3 9908 109 Street, Edmonton T5K 1H5

Phone 414-0743

www.laurieblakeman.com

MP's Remarks Insensitive, Hurtful and Uninformed

Canadian Alliance MP Larry Spencer claims that there is a "well-orchestrated ... conspiracy" in this country to seduce and recruit young boys and that homosexuality should be re-criminalized.

"It is shocking that such insensitive, hurtful and uninformed comments could come from an elected Member of Parliament," said Gilles Marchildon, Executive Director of Egale Canada. "His outrageous comments would be

laughable if they were not so harmful and outside Canada's usual civil discourse."

"It's remarkable that despite the progress made to ensure full equality for all Canadian citizens, a Member of Parliament suggests that we undo it all," continued Mr. Marchildon. "Canada is a world leader when it comes to equal treatment of minority groups. Mr. Spencer would drag Canada back to the stone-age of human rights."

Mr. Spencer has been fired as the party's family issues critic and has temporarily resigned from the Alliance caucus. But Egale feels that he should be expelled from the Party.

"Such views are unacceptable to the Canadian public and they should be unacceptable to Mr. Harper as well," said Laurie Arron, Egale's Director of Advocacy. "So far, Mr. Harper

has only given Mr. Spencer a slap on the wrist until the furor dies down. That's just not good enough. Mr. Spencer should be permanently expelled."

"One of the age-old myths about gay men is that we sexually abuse children," continued Mr. Arron, Egale's Director of Advocacy. "It's an insidious

claim frequently made against unpopular minorities and it has

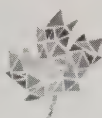
been completely discredited by expert studies."

"A review done by the American Psychological Association of research on the subject of gay and lesbian parenting leads us to conclude that there is no evidence in the scientific literature that the children of gay and lesbian parents are at greater risk for sexual abuse," said Dr. Karen R.

Cohen, Associate Executive Director of the Canadian Psychological Association. "Research has shown that: 1) the great majority of sexual abusers are male; 2) adult women rarely sexually abuse children; 3) the great majority of sexual abuse cases involve an adult male abusing a young female; and 4) gay men are not more likely than heterosexual men to sexually abuse children."

For more information:
Gilles Marchildon, Executive Director, Egale Canada: 613.230.1043, gilles@egale.ca
Laurie Arron, Director of Advocacy, Egale Canada: 416.839.7178, laurie@egale.ca
Karen Cohen, Associate Executive Director, Canadian Psychological Association: 613.237.2144 x 44, kcohen@cpa.ca

See also:
www.egale.ca



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Kids Christmas Party
Sun. Dec. 14 All Free!
3pm to 7pm



Presents
Food
Kids Drinks
Santa

Private Members Club
10345-104 St / 426-3150



Recognized Community Builders

Alcoholics Anonymous

AA is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Call 424-5900 for times and places of Gay and Lesbian meetings.

Bi-Sexual Support Group

The Bi-Sexual Support Group meets on a monthly basis to talk about issues surrounding the Bisexual Community. Contact GLCCE for more information at (780) 488-3234.

Dignity Edmonton

This Edmonton chapter is a support community for gay and lesbian Catholics and friends. Contact Bernard at 451-1794 or Joseph at 481-4218

Edmonton Prime Timers

We are a chapter of Prime Timers Worldwide, an international social organization for mature gay and bisexual men and their younger friends over 21. Our activities

include: theatre nights, video nights, pub nights, Sunday brunches, and dining out. We meet the second Sunday of every month (except July and August) at 3:00 PM at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton (12530 110 Ave.) for a social period, a guest speaker, and an optional supper at a restaurant. For more information, contact Peter at 426-7019, or better yet...join us at our monthly meeting.

Edmonton Rainbow Business Association (ERBA)

Gay men and Lesbians in business and our non-gay friends; Join us ...share your business knowledge, learn more, make new friends, network ... in positive, proud space where being yourself is the norm. Call Bill Faulkner for more information at 422-6207. Membership \$25.00/yr.

Edmonton Vocal Minority

Women and men of all sexual orientations dedicated to sharing and preserving the cultural heritage of the queer community. Everyone is welcome to join this mixed voice choir as either a singer or a support member. Come and sing your pride! For information: Telephone:

(780) 479.2038, E-mail: evm@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca, on the web at: <http://www.planet.eon.net/~toocute/evm/>, or write to PO Box 12091, Main Post Office Edmonton, AB T5J 3L2.

Gay & Lesbian Centre

Providing Resources, Referrals and Support to all members of the general public regarding Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues. Suite 45, 9912 - 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, (780) 488-3234. WebPages with more information at <http://edmc.net/glcce/>

HIV Edmonton

HIV Edmonton works cooperatively with all those organizations in Alberta and across the country who are working to help limit the spread of HIV infection. HIV Edmonton utilizes a best practices Harm Reduction approach in Health Promotion, Advocacy and Support, as well as, maintaining an extensive Resource Centre for use by health practitioners, health promoters, community organizations and those infected and affected by HIV. For more information on the activities of HIV Edmonton, please call

(780) 488-5742 or contact us by email at mail@hivedmonton.com. Visit our Website at HIV Edmonton <http://www.hivedmonton.com/>

Illusions Social Club

A social club for Cross-dressers, Transsexuals and their supporters. We hold two socials each month, one on the second Thursday and one on the third Saturday. For more information, write to Illusions Social Club, Box 356, Main Post Office, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2J6. Phone: 424-2685 to talk to someone person to person.

Imperial Sovereign Court of the Wild Rose

The mission of the Court is to raise funds for charities and other organizations, which provide direct services to gay and lesbian individuals. Meetings of the Society are held at 8 PM on the last Wednesday of the month at the Garage. Our e-mail is: wildrosecourt@yahoo.com. Visit our Website is at: Wild Rose Court <http://www.geocities.com/wildrosecourt/>

ICARE Interfaith Centre for AIDS/

HIV Resources & Education

Formerly Interfaith Association on AIDS, the purpose of ICARE is to enhance the well-being of people affected by HIV by offering resources and opportunities for education to service providers and communities. You can contact us at 780-448-1768 or by e-mail at icare@oanet.com

Lambda Christian Community Church

We are a non-denominational Christian church providing a safe and healing space for Edmonton's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Christians and their friends. 11148-84 Avenue (Garneau United Place) Edmonton, T6G 0V8. Call 474-0753. Weekly Sunday service at 7 p. m. e-mail at lambdachurch@shaw.ca

Living Positive

Emotional, spiritual and psychological support is available through Living Positive to all those affected by HIV infection. We offer strong, loving, confidential support. We also meet weekly and share our mutual experiences. Living Positive is entirely directed by and for people who share a

common diagnosis of HIV+. Peer counselling, hospital visits and a speakers bureau are also available through our society. Phone 488-5768 or e-mail: livepos@telusplanet.net.

Lutherans Concerned: Edmonton

We are a spiritual community for lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight people. Lutherans Concerned gathers monthly for worship, sharing, and friendship. We offer individual support and a safe space for our own spiritual questions. Call 426-0905, or write P.O. Box 11095, Edmonton, AB, T5J 3K4 e-mail: lylemillang@powersurfi.com

Making Waves Swim Club (MWSC)

Open to all who are interested in lane swimming in a Masters club, we provide coaching to all levels of swimmers - those wishing to learn, those wishing to improve stroke technique and those wishing to train competitively. Drop in opportunity gives you flexibility to match your schedule. We swim at Bonnie Doon Leisure Centre, 8648 - 81 Street, Edmonton from September to June. Our members enjoy numerous social events arranged by the club. Please feel free to contact us to find out more information:

Contact us at: 1. WebPages: http://www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm/home.htm. 2. E-mail: makingwaves_edm@yahoo.com 3. Phone: Warren 780-920-2847. 4. Attend a practice - your first swim is free!

Northern Chaps

Edmonton's Leather - Fetish club for Gay, Lesbian, and straight men and women was established sixteen years ago. We strike to educate the rest of the community through workshops, staged demonstrations and events in order to heighten awareness. Northern Chaps meets the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. E-mail us at: Northenchaps@telusplanet.net

Northern Titans

We bowl every year from September till April, and you do not have to belong to a team to join - just show up. We have bowlers whose skills range from beginner to average - and we will give the new people pointers to improve their skills. The cost is \$15 (students \$10) for three games of bowling. We have a lot of fun socializing during bowling and afterwards most of us go out for supper. It is an excel-

lent way to get to know people. Northern Titans bowls at Gateway Rec. Centre, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd Edmonton. For more information call Peter at 483-1075 - Or email at northernchaps@telusplanet.net

OUTreach

OUTreach is a university-based organization for gays, lesbians and bisexuals interested in an academic atmosphere. Meetings are held every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. at the Second Cup on campus. Topics vary from week to week. Additional information is available by e-mail: outreach@ualberta.ca. They also have a WebPages at OUTreach U of A <http://www.ualberta.ca/~outreach>

Ready - Set - Square!

Brand new caller, brand new location. Square dancing every Wednesday 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Singles, couples, beginners & experienced dancers are all welcome. Proud member of the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs. For more information including location and times call: 433-3068 or email: readysquare@hotmail.com.

Yours, Mine, Ours and Us

Yours, Mine Ours and Us is a GLBT Parenting group, this group is for pier support of other GLBT parents and their friends. For information please call Garry at 780-426-6311.

Youth Understanding Youth

We meet every Saturday from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Gay and Lesbian Centre of Edmonton, Suite 103, 10612-124 Street. A social support group for anyone under the age of 25 years. For more information, or to give your input, e-mail: yuyedm@hotmail.com. Our WebPages are at Youth Understanding Youth <http://www.virtue.nu/yuy/>

Visions - Unitarian Church of Edmonton

We are an open, liberal religious community that value diversity and celebrate our Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered members. With us, you are encouraged with open mind and heart to form your own set of personal beliefs. Sunday services at 9:30am and 11:15am. 12530 - 110 Avenue Ph. 454-8073. For more information, call Mike at 482-6582.

Womonspace

We are a social and recreational society for lesbians in Edmonton. We hold monthly dances and other activities. Look for our monthly newsletter around town, or phone 482-1794. Visit our WebPages at Womonspace <http://www.gaycanada.com/womonspace/>

Regional Organizations

Grande Prairie

Gay and Lesbian Community, Box 1492, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 4Z3. E-mail: gpgayorg@hotmail.com

Out North

Box 2827, Yellowknife, NT., X1A 2R2, Phone line: 867-669-7279. WebPages: <http://www.yellowknife.com/ptartan/outnorth.htm> E-mail: out_north99@hotmail.com

**If you want
your group
updated
or listed
please
e-mail:**

times10@telusplanet.net



My Christmas Agenda

Mickey Wilson Lambda Christian Community Church

Okay, you've busted me. I celebrate Christmas fully. I celebrate the fact that God chose to enter into history personally through the birth of a child, a human being like me. God chose to taste the joy and the sorrow of our lives personally. I light candles, I set up my "crèche", I sing and pray. I listen to Christmas music for weeks and plan worship services throughout Advent filled with ritual and I hope, much meaning. We still read the Christmas story every year before we open our gifts. All this in spite of the fact that more than a few folks have told me that Christmas has turned into a totally secular holiday.

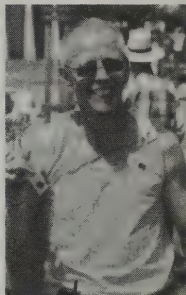
Regardless, I don't mind anything that makes people think about others, walk around with smiles on their face - and, if an old man in a red suit wants to give me presents, who am I to argue? And ... I have to admit ... I really enjoy giving presents. I would tell you what I have planned to give my partner, our son and the many dear friends that make up my chosen family, but since a few of them read this page, I can't.

But what would I really like for this holiday season? I tend

to buy most of the material things that I want. Sometimes we wait for books we want when we need to and right now most of our big/important purchases are set around planning for a new home. But there are non-material things that might be nice to see gifted. This past week you've heard of the Gay Conspiracy no doubt (formerly known as the Gay Agenda) - well, here's my version, especially for Christmas:

My Christmas Agenda

Our rights shall never be diminished on the basis of our sexual or gender orientation



There shall be no job discrimination on the basis of our sexual or gender orientation. This shall include service in the church. Sexual or gender orientation shall play no

role in division of marital assets or custody of children in cases of dissolution of marriage. Sexual or gender orientation shall play no role in matters of adoption, whether by a single person or a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender couple. There shall be no housing discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender orientation.

There shall be no discrimination in the justice system or in representation on the basis of sexual or gender orientation. A right to marry exists and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples may marry under the same rights and terms as any

heterosexual couple People who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender do live in fear of violence or death because of their sexual or gender orientation Our children will grow up feeling good about themselves and their family All people would respect and celebrate the diversity of God's creation None of this can happen unless we seek it out. So, as you continue to make your Christmas lists, how about you let your friends and relatives (and elected representatives) know what you would like for Christmas this year. Please join us over the Christmas season for one of our Advent or Christmas Services

Lambda Christian Community Church

11148-84 Avenue
(Garneau United Church)

Worship Services:
Sundays @ 7PM

Sunday November 30
@ 7 PM Advent 1 –
Service of Hope
Sunday December 7 @
7 PM Advent 2 –
Service of Peace

Sunday December 14
@ 7 PM Advent 3 –
Service of Joy
Sunday December 21
@ 7 PM Advent 4 –
Service of Love

Christmas Eve Services
7 PM Family Service
10:30 PM carol Sing &
Candlelight
Communion Service

Name That War

By Nicholas D. Kristof

A drum roll, please: It's time to announce the results of the Name That War Contest.

In a column 10 days ago about Iraq, I expressed frustration at the absence of a good name for our war there. So I offered prizes (Iraqi 250-dinar notes with Saddam's picture) and invited readers to send in entries.

Then I fled to Guatemala and El Salvador, and when I returned to the office this week, there were 4,000 entries from all over the world. Hundreds of people offered "Bush's Folly," "Burning Bush," "Bush League War," "Bubba's War," "Shrub's War," "Operation Quicksand" or "The Crawford Conflict." Then there were zillions of "Iraqmire," "Iraqgate" and "Iraqnam."

Lois from New Zealand suggested "Operation Bushwhack Iraq." Avie Hern of California offered "Bushkrieg." Some people suggested that instead of Operation Iraqi Freedom, this is "Operation Iraqi Liberation." I thought they were hawks until I recognized the acronym: OIL. Also on the petroleum front, Peter Wilson of Pennsylvania offered "Mother of Oil Wars."

Some names were interesting but a bit long. For example, Charles Hayes of New York offered these options: "Bremer Takes a Baath," "I Waged Two Wars Against Saddam and

All I Got Was His Headache" and "Visit Scenic Saddam and Gomorrah."

The last is, of course, a play on the movie "The Big Easy." There were lots of other pop culture references (my assistant, Christina Lem, had to translate some for me; I speak foreign languages but have never been fluent in pop). A Minnesota astronomer who evidently likes Britney Spears offered: "Operation Oops, We Did It Again." And movie buffs urged "Operation Kick the Dog," "The Empire Strikes Out," "Apocalypse Right Now," "Mission Implausible: A Job Well Spun" and "Trek 2: Wrath of Neo-Khan."

Scholarly readers argued that the distinctive quality of this war was America's claim that it has the right to invade other countries if they are developing weapons of mass destruction and may threaten us. John Parry of North Carolina suggested "Pre-emptive War I," leaving room for us to continue the series if we move on to Tehran and Pyongyang. On the model of the War of Jenkins' Ear, one

reader suggested "The War of Bush's Flight Suit." Harold Kramer of Massachusetts single-handedly came up with "Rummy's Retreat," "Cheney's Chaos," "Perle's Predicament," "Powell's Problem" and "Rice's Regret."

The five winners, each of whom gets a 250-dinar note left over from my last Iraq trip, are: Brad Corsello of New York for "Dubya Dubya III"; Richard Sanders for "Rolling Blunder"; John Fell of California for "Desert Slog," Will Hutchinson of Vermont for "Mess in Potamia"; and Willard Oriol of New York for "Blood, Baath and Beyond."

More seriously, during this holiday weekend, I hope we'll think often and appreciatively of those Americans who are in Iraq right now. Humor cannot erase their fear and loneliness in the face of Washington's policy failures, or the heartbreak here in so many homes where bereaved parents, spouses and orphans are struggling in this season to remember why they should be giving thanks.



PLEASE JOIN ME FOR MY SEASONAL OPEN HOUSE

I invite you to share
the spirit of the season
with friends and colleagues

Friday, December 19, 2003
4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Prince of Wales Armouries
10440 - 108 Avenue

Donations to Edmonton's Food Bank will be gratefully accepted

Anne McLellan, M.P.

working with you for Edmonton West

City Council out of step with Edmontonians

Over 82% of Edmontonians believe adults should be free to choose the kind of restaurant, bar or gaming facility they visit even if it means they could choose a place that permits smoking. This is just one of the findings contained in a recently conducted survey sponsored by *Edmontonians for Choice*.

"This fact, along with other survey results, supports our organization's belief that Edmontonians need to be

given the opportunity to choose for themselves on key issues affecting our community," says Ian Taylor, co-chair, *Edmontonians for Choice* and executive director of Alberta Satellite Bingo. "Polling results clearly show that Edmonton's Mayor and Council are not in step with the majority of Edmontonians"

Although the main subject of our survey concerned Edmonton's no smoking bylaw, 75% of the survey respondents do not smoke. "It is important to note this fact," says Taylor. "It clearly shows the issue at hand is greater than the smoking issue. It is an issue of Edmontonians having the right to choose for themselves decisions that affect their personal lifestyle."

Another survey result noted that over 73% of respondents indicated that business people

should be able to choose the kind of restaurant, bar or gaming facility they operate even if it means they could choose to cater to smokers. A similar number, 75%, of Edmontonians believe there definitely should be facilities in Edmonton that cater to smokers providing minors are prohibited.

A majority of Edmontonians—56% also believe private clubs such as the Royal Canadian Legions should be free to choose how they operate and the smoking bylaw should not apply to those facilities.

The survey, which was conducted by Edmonton-based Wes Trends Research, interviewed 402 adult residents between September 24 and October 6, 2003. A sample for this size is deemed accurate to within 5%, 19 times out of 20

"Survey respondents also indicated strong support for allowing establishments that wish to cater to smokers to have designated areas that are separated from other areas by floor to ceiling walls and separate ventilation systems," says Taylor. "Sixty nine percent of respondents stated that this would be a better approach than an outright ban on smoking."

When survey respondents were asked to rate Edmonton Mayor Bill Smith and City Council on their approach to handling the smoking issue, 50% of the respondents indicated Council's performance was poor and very poor. Only 8% felt Council had handled this issue very well.

"What was very revealing for us," says Taylor "was the response to the follow up

question that asked about trust. When asked, "what kind of person would you most trust on the smoking issue?" only 3% of survey respondents mentioned city politicians. The same believability exists among anti-smoking lobby groups—3%. The trust level for business people in the hospitality industry was four times as high at 12%. Highest trust on this issue was given to medical professionals—41%."

"Edmontonians for Choice is very concerned about how our city is being governed by our elected officials," says Taylor. "We intend to make sure our municipal politicians pay attention to their constituents and not get away with passing policy that does not reflect the wishes of citizens."

Adds Taylor: "Our concern goes beyond the no smoking issue. *Edmontonians for Choice* is not a pro-smoking group. In fact, most of our members do not smoke and most believe that smoking should be discouraged. We strongly believe, however that there are better ways to handle the smoking issue, without unduly negating an adult's right to exercise freedom of choice.

Edmontonians for Choice is a coalition of hospitality, charity, business and community groups and individuals dedicated to preserving freedom of choice for Edmontonians.

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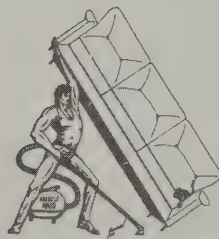
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Gay Catholics Applaud Massachusetts Court Ruling

November 18, 2003 - Leaders of Dignity USA, the organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics and their supporters, expressed their joy about today's decision in Massachusetts' highest court ruling that same-sex couples are legally entitled to marry under the state constitution. Both Dignity USA and Dignity/Boston signed onto a "friend of

the court" brief in this case.

"This only highlights the fact that same-sex couples should not be denied their right to marry and live in a loving relationship no matter where in this country they reside," stated Matthew Gallagher, Dignity USA's Executive Director. "Two individuals, in a committed relationship should not be denied the legal rights and benefits afforded heterosexual couples."

Gallagher continued, "We are delighted that this court saw through efforts to claim religion supports having different laws for lesbian and gay people. The right of inheritance and hospital visitation rights for gay couples and the hundreds of other

benefits that accompany marriage are not special rights, but equal rights. We are happy that the voice of gay Catholics was heard in this case, alongside the brave couples who brought the suit and their many supporters in the legal community."

"We believe that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have the right to full expression of their sexuality in ways that are consistent with Catholic/Christian values, including the right to enter into committed relationships," stated Sam Sinnett, Dignity USA's President. "It is exciting to see this court affirm this right."

Dignity USA is the only national Catholic organization that offers a

multifaceted program of support for same-sex couples and blesses their commitments in chapters across the country. Dignity USA maintains a national couples registry to recognize and record these unions.

Dignity USA is the foremost organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics, their families, friends and supporters. Founded in 1969, it is an independent non-profit organization with members and Chapters across the country. Dignity USA works for full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the life of the Church and Society. For more information, please visit www.dignityusa.org

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You and Your Funny Bone..:)

Anything For a Quarter

A man is walking through the mall with his teen-age son. The son is tossing a quarter up in the air and catching it between his teeth. On one such attempt, the boy fails to clomp down with his teeth and ends up getting the quarter lodged in his throat. As the boy begins to choke and wheeze the father panics and starts yelling for help. Not far from the action is a man sitting at a coffee shop reading a paper and drinking his coffee, when he hears the fathers distressed cries he patiently puts down his coffee and folds his paper, he then walks slowly over to the boy and grabs him by the balls and squeezes the shit out of them. The boy coughs up the quarter and the man catches it in his hand and proceeds to walk away with it, sitting back down to his coffee. The amazed father runs over and says, "Thank You Sir, you saved my son's life, are you a Doctor?" "No" the man replies, "I work for Revenue Canada."

Sweet Deal

A Canadian is walking down the street with a case of beer under his arm. His friend Doug stops him and asks, "Hey Bob! Whacha get the case of beer for?" "I got it for my Boyfriend, eh." answers Bob. "Oh!" exclaims Doug, "Good trade."

Charity Time

A local charity office realized that it had never received a donation from the town's most successful lawyer. The director called him, hoping to get a contribution. "Our research shows that out of a yearly income of at least \$500,000, you've given not a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like

to give back to the community in some way?" The lawyer replied, "First, did your research also show that my mother is dying after a long illness, and has medical bills that are several times her annual income?" Embarrassed, the director mumbled, "Um...no." "Or that my brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair?" The stricken director began to stammer out an apology but was interrupted. "Or that my sister's husband died in a car accident," the lawyer's voice rising in indignation, "leaving her penniless with three children?!" The humiliated director said simply, "I had no idea..." "So if I don't give any money to them, why the hell would I give any to you?"

First Day

A new employee is hired at the Tickle Me Elmo factory. The personnel manager explains her duties, and tells her to report to work promptly at 8:00 AM. The next day at 8:45 AM, there's a knock at the personnel manager's door. The assembly line foreman comes in and starts ranting about this new employee. He says she's incredibly slow, and the whole line is backing up. The foreman takes the personnel manager down to the factory floor to show him the problem. Sure enough, Elmo's are backed up all over the place. At the end of the line is the new employee. She has a roll of the material used for the Elmo's and a big bag of marbles. They both watch as she cuts a little piece of fabric, wraps it around two marbles, and starts sewing the little package between Elmo's legs. The personnel manager starts laughing hysterically. After several minutes, he pulls himself together, walks over to the woman, and says, "I'm sorry, I guess you

misunderstood me yesterday. Your job is to give Elmo two test tickles."

Stupid Questions

A traveling salesman rings the doorbell, and 10-year-old Little Johnny answers, holding a beer and smoking a fat cigar. The salesman says, "Young man, is your mother home?" Little Johnny taps his ash on the carpet and says, "What do you think?"

Bad Luck

A young man goes into a drug store to buy condoms. The pharmacist says the condoms come in packs of three, nine or 12, and asks which the young man wants. "Well," he said, "I've been seeing this guy for a while and he's really hot. I want the condoms because I think tonight's 'the night.'" We're having dinner with his parents, and then we're going out. And I've got a feeling I'm going to get lucky after that. Once he's had me, he'll want me all the time, so you'd better give me the 12 pack." The young man makes his purchase and leaves. Later that evening, he sits down to dinner with his boyfriend and his parents. He asks if he might give the blessing, and they agree. He begins the prayer, but continues praying for several minutes. The boy leans over and says, "You never told me that you were such a religious person." He leans over to her and says, "You never told me that your father is a pharmacist."

Mix Up

A man enters the hospital for a circumcision. When he comes to after the procedure, he's perturbed to see several doctors standing around his bed. "Son, there's been a bit of a mix-up," admits the surgeon. "I'm afraid

there was an accident, and we were forced to perform a sex-change operation. You now have a vagina instead of a penis." "What!" gasps the patient? "You mean I'll never experience another erection?" "Oh, you might," the surgeon reassures him. "Just not yours."

Twelve and a Chaser

A man goes into a bar and orders 12 shots of tequila. The bartender looks on as the guy downs one after another. As he slams the 10th one, the bartender says, "I don't think you should be drinking those so fast." You would if you had what I have," the man says, throwing back number 11."Well, what is

it you have?" The man throws back his last shot and says, "Fifty cents."

Nasty Wish

A guy from Quebec and a guy from Ontario are fighting over a lantern when a genie pops out and grants them each one wish. The Quebecer says, "I want a wall around Quebec to protect my culture. Make it about 150 feet high, so nothing can get in or out." "It is done," says the genie, turning to the other guy. "And your wish? "The guy from Ontario smiles and says, "Fill it with water."

Allies

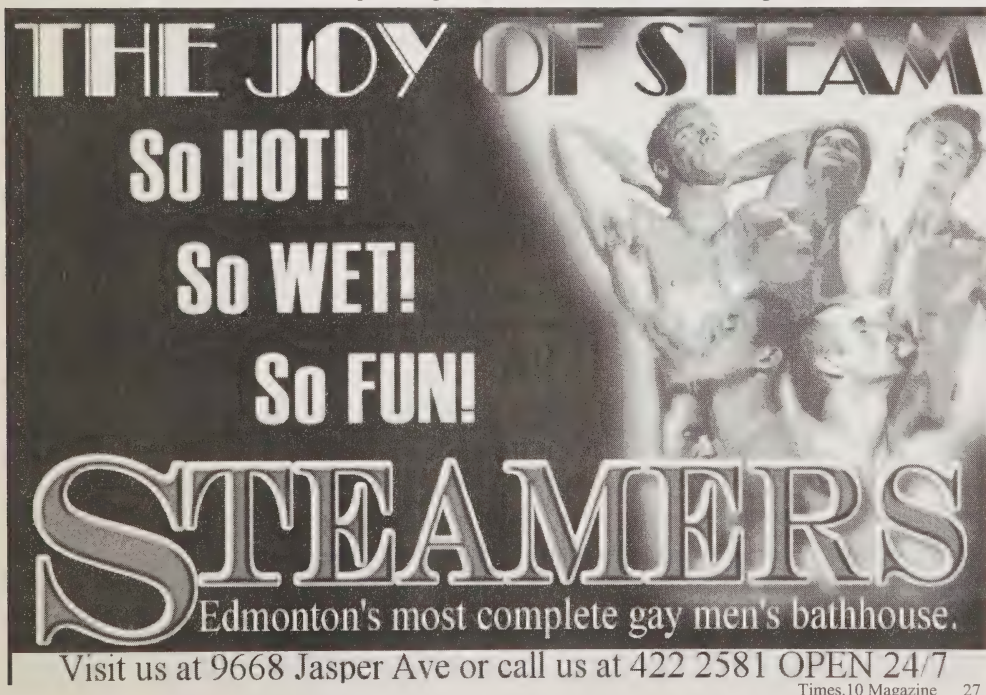
As a squad of American soldiers was patrolling the

Iraqi border, they came across a badly mangled dead body. As they got closer, they found it was an Iraqi soldier. A short distance up the road, they found a badly mangled American soldier in a ditch on the other side of the road, struggling to breathe. They ran to him, cradled his blood-covered head and asked him what had happened. "Well," he whispered, "I was walking down this road, armed to the teeth when I came across this heavily armed Iraqi border guard. I looked him right in the eye and shouted, 'Saddam Hussein is an unprincipled, lying piece of trash!'" "He looked me right in the eye and

shouted back, 'George W. Bush is an unprincipled, lying piece of trash too!'" "We were standing there shaking hands when the truck hit us."

Secretaries at the bar

Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld are sitting in a bar. A guy walks in and asks the barman, "Isn't that Powell and Rumsfeld?" The barkeep says, "Yep, that's them." So, the guy walks over to the two and says, "Hello, what are you guys doing?" Rumsfeld says, "We're planning World War III," to which the guy replies, "Really? What's going to happen?" Rumsfeld says, "Well, we're going to kill 10 million Afghans and one bicycle repairman." And the guy exclaims, "Why are you going to kill a bicycle repairman!?" With that, Rumsfeld turns to Powell and says, "See, I told you no one would care about the 10 million Afghans!"



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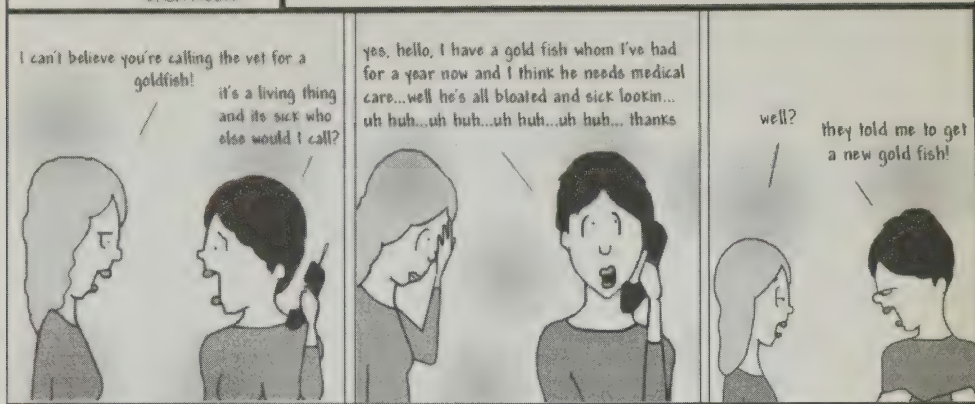
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The Origins of Sexuality

Have you ever given thought to the reasons why we are the way we are? Not specifically a question of "How could this happen?" but rather "Why me?" Diversity of nature definitely lends itself to create those of us who differ from the majority in

our sexual preference, but how much of this behaviour is learned?

During the course of history, we have seen many cases of individuals who have been removed from society, sometimes at very young age. This is usually an act of extreme cruelty altering the very development of such important things as the recognition of self, and the formation of language. In the year 1800, a boy was discovered in a small town in Southern France, who was completely different from other boys. This 12 year old was a feral child; the product of many years

in nature without interaction with other human beings. He had no language, was oblivious to temperature extremes, and had no ego at all.

Upon discovery, he was brought to Paris, where attempts were made to introduce him into society. It was here that the boy spent many years, learning with limited progress. During his time at the school, observations were made regarding him of a personal nature. Learning became quite difficult during the period of pubescence, when he did not understand the metamorphosis that he was undergoing. Much

different from today's sexual education, the boy received no formal instruction in the area of "sexual behaviour". As a result, he demonstrated an attitude of indifference to gender, and sexuality as a whole. While he did show a preference to women on one occasion, his motives remain doubted by this critic.

The concept of the mind as a "blank slate" has been around since the period of The Enlightenment, introduced by John Locke, and remains a prevalent theory to this day. It begs the question as to whether our development is predetermined, or if our character and traits are based on stimulus in the environment that surrounds us. From birth most are taught based on an educational curriculum that has been developed over time, teaching us what "should be learned". I was taught about love between a man and a woman, not between men or between women. Because a pre-conceived notion of "normality" was introduced to me at a young age, I knew no better than to pursue the only path that I was taught.

Sometimes the path that is chosen for you is not the route you were meant to take. The choice is yours.

Colin Muir
greenaligator@hotmail.com

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Finding Yourself

By Mike Gesy

Where do you go to find a partner? In Edmonton's Gay Community you would have to look know further than the gay clubs. If you want to party get drunk, dance and get laid with any boy of your choice, hit Edmonton's gay clubs. If you find it too hard to find that boy, hit Edmonton's Gay Bath House. All you need is a bit of cash and you're in!

Sex is everywhere you look. It's on T.V in the clubs it's in the air so, crab your best outfit run to the ATM grab some cash and hit the clubs. Flirt with all those pretty boys pound back a few drinks than get your ass on the dance floor get into the zone. Let the D.J spin that record, as sweat drips off your face as you thrust those hips. Lick your lusher lips show the crowd what you got. Work your body let it all go and if you want to party just grad somebody. Tonight is your night in a way your famous all those boys wanting more. Give them that sexy stare play truth or dare! Run your fingers threw your dark hair.

There is no need to ask for his name, he's yours for just this night. Wave to all your friends as you leave the club with him on your arm! Taking off your cloths you think to yourself "God I hope he is good" As

your bodies slam together you fall into a trance. As he pants you tremble.

You did it you're a fucking star. You live the gay mans dream nothing is what it seems. You tried to be a boy you tried to be a man and there you stand with cum on your hand. You spent all that money drank all that alcohol you played the part. Now you lay in that bed your a mess.

Calling up all your friends the very next day, you got to brag about that boy you took home. The home witch you live alone. Your friend sits on the other end of the line rolling his eyes; really he could care less! Yet he'll put on an act in hopes to fool you in thinking he's proud of you. That maybe you're even cool.

Edmonton's Gay Club community what a fantasy, where nothing is what it seems! A place you can live in be what ever you want to be, it's like a dream. But what happens when you wake up?

Now I'm not perfect in any way, not cause I'm gay but because I'm human. I'm guilty too of being part of the club life thinking of only me, of doing the very same things that make Edmonton's Gay club community thrive. I've cheated slept around been a total mess, been someone I'm not Thought I had great friends, thought I was ever popular a star! Bounced guy to guy thinking only of myself, and the club, I was blind to reality what really mattered.

I'm not painting all those who may go to the clubs the same as the rest. I'm simply satiating what I've seen what I lived and what I know.

Living that life really does not get you that far. I've learnt many things in this community and it's not for me. For once I feel free and I know me, who I really am it's probably hard for you to understand.

I live in the now and I'm proud of who I have become, I say out loud "I am proud" Sometimes I think good hearted people get caught up in all the trash. They don't see it coming it hits them hard and fast. As they hit rock bottom do you think there friends are there to lend a helping hand? To give good advice that they will not benefit from? So self-serving, so selfish!

This community can consume you in a blink of an eye. So many young teens get eaten up and spit out its sickening. I often wonder just how much cash these clubs make and how much they put back into this community? You might think I've lost my sanity, but your wrong I have never been so clear so grounded. I'm older now, not so pretty and yet I feel so alive so loved and I'm not getting it from some club or some one-night stand. I get it from inside. I learnt that you have to love yourself before you can love anyone. I learnt that having a bunch of friends would not fill that emptiness. That keeping myself distracted from what really matters in life was not healthy.

To end this article all I have to say is know body is perfect and being gay isn't ether. Remember being gay is a small part of who you really are. Don't try to fill that emptiness with a bunch of friends or one-night stands. Don't pretend you are someone your not you'll only hurt yourself in the end. It's so hard to find a true friend in this crazy world but there is hope and more out there than you can see.

Open your heart open your eyes and set your standards high be a leader not a follower! Sometimes being alone or different then the rest is the best thing for you. If you're jaded really I don't blame you this world this community is not an easy place to live. You make your life what it is by the choices you make, so think twice before you jump.

Edmonton's Gay Club community whether you love it or hate it its here to stay and will never change but you can. Take care and write back I like input on what I write.

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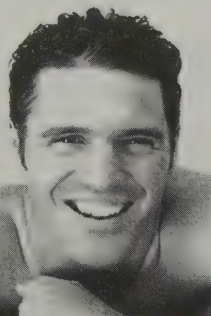
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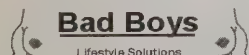
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VaxGen Results of HIV Vaccine

VaxGen, Inc. announced preliminary results from its randomized, double blind, placebo-controlled Phase III clinical trial in Thailand to evaluate AIDSVAX B/E, an investigational vaccine (rgp 120) for the prevention of HIV infection.

The vaccine candidate did not show efficacy for either the primary or secondary endpoints. The primary endpoint for the trial was the prevention of infection by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The secondary endpoints concerned whether vaccination slowed the

progression of disease among those who received the vaccine but later became infected with HIV. The vaccine candidate appeared to be well tolerated with no serious adverse events related to the vaccine. The vaccine cannot cause HIV infection.

The trial was well conducted in accordance with international good clinical practices. Extensive education and risk-reduction counselling were provided during the trial. Data indicate that study volunteers reported marked reductions in behaviours, including sharing of needles, associated with HIV infection.

"This trial was conducted according to the highest international clinical standards, and is one of many examples of Thailand's long-standing commitment to HIV vaccine development," said Kachit Choopanya, M.D., the trial's principal investigator. "With the help of the trial volunteers and national and international

collaborators, Thailand has strengthened its research capacity and acquired valuable expertise with which to carry on clinical research."

The trial results were analyzed by scientists from the Bangkok Vaccine Evaluation Group (BVEG), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Statistical Center for HIV/AIDS Research and Prevention (SCHARP) of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and VaxGen.

"The outcome of this trial is one more reminder of how difficult it is to combat HIV and how important it is for the international public health community to redouble the effort to develop an effective vaccine," said Donald P. Francis, M.D., D.Sc., VaxGen's president. "Although we are disappointed with the outcome, VaxGen and our Thai collaborators have created a model that can be used around the world for

advanced clinical research of an HIV vaccine."

About the Phase III Clinical Trial of AIDSVAX B/E

The trial was designed to evaluate the safety and efficacy of AIDSVAX B/E, primarily against the blood-borne transmission of HIV subtype E and one strain of HIV subtype B. The study volunteers were 2,546 injecting drug users in Bangkok, Thailand. During the 36-month trial, a total of seven injections were administered at months 0, 1, 6, 12, 18, 24 and 30. The ratio of vaccine to placebo recipients was 1:1.

During the trial, 105 volunteers who received placebo became infected with HIV; 106 volunteers who received at least one injection of AIDSVAX B/E became infected. The annualized infection rate in placebo and vaccine recipients was 3.1%.

The trial was conducted at 17 clinical sites in the greater

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Bangkok Metropolitan Area. Trial volunteers received education and counseling every six months to avoid behavior that could lead to HIV infection and were advised to assume that they may have received a placebo or that the vaccine might be ineffective.

"This was an international effort that brought together the public and private sectors to focus on a common cause," Kachit said. "We owe a special debt to the people who stepped forward to volunteer for this trial. More than 90% of the volunteers completed their full three-year commitment to the study, and their dedication should serve as an inspiration for others to volunteer for HIV vaccine studies."

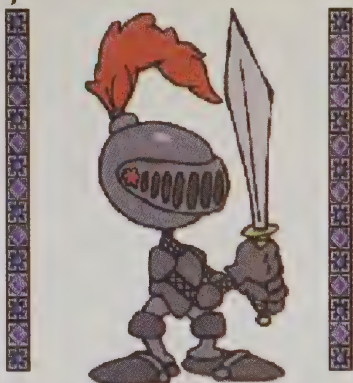
The trial design was reviewed by the Thailand Food and Drug Administration, the Thailand Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the Thailand National AIDS Subcommittee on AIDS Vaccines, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Ethical

Review Committee, the Committee on Human Rights Related to Human Experimentation, Mahidol University, the UNAIDS Vaccine Advisory Committee, the U.S. FDA and its Vaccine Advisory Committee, and the Institutional Review Board of the CDC. The study was primarily funded and overseen by VaxGen and administered by BVEG, a partnership among the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Mahidol University, the Thailand MOPH-U.S. CDC Collaboration and VaxGen.

About VaxGen

Based in Brisbane, Calif., VaxGen is a biopharmaceutical company engaged in the development, manufacture and commercialization of biologic products for the prevention and treatment of serious human infectious disease, including anthrax and smallpox. For more information, please visit the company's website at www.vaxgen.com.

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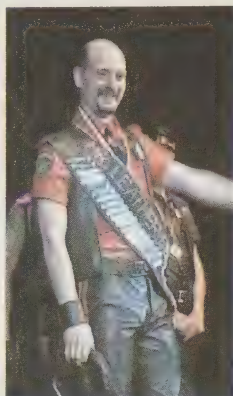
Title Of Mr. Leatherman Toronto 2004

Remi Collette (Mr. Leather Zelda's 2004) is the new Mr. Leatherman Toronto. Eight contestants, each winners of preliminary contests held in recent months, vied for the coveted MLT titles and over \$20,000 in prizes! The judges had a challenging job in making the decision between the eight diverse and worthy contestants. When the scores were counted, Remi emerged the winner. He

assumes the 2004 role as Toronto's new leather ambassador, succeeding the popular MLT 2003, Paul Ciantar. First runner up went to Jared Sisons (Mr. Woody's/Priape 2004). Second runner up was awarded to Jean-Guy Cloutier (Mr. Barracks Leather 2004). Alan Anderson (Mr. Black Eagle 2004) was named Mr. Leather

Fellowship 2004, chosen by his fellow contestants as the man who best epitomizes the values of leather brotherhood. Alan succeeds Greg Davis and will assist MLT 2004 in his fundraising activities next year. Other contestants included: Larry Des Rosiers (Mr. Crews

Leather 2004); Ron Gullis (Mr. 501 Leather 2004); Dean Nicholson (Mr. Zone



Leather 2004) and Mick Petitpas (Mr. Trax V Leather 2004).

Continuing what is now a three year tradition, MLT

announced the winner of the Bootblack Toronto Contest. The contestants in this competition, open to both men and women, showcase the art and technique of bootpolishing. MLT Bootblack 2004 was awarded to Slave boy Dave (Galbraith). Boi joe (aka Kathryn Hunter) stepped down as Bootblack Toronto 2003 to a tremendous ovation, proving her lasting contributions in the past year. Slave boy Dave is now eligible to compete at IML 2004 in the Bootblack competition. Also competing for the Bootblack Toronto 2004 title was "Sandman" (aka Brian Denyer).

Every year MLT presents Community Awards. The Courtlan Forsey Award is

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given "to an individual or organization in Toronto's leather/SM community that has made contributions of lasting significance to the leather/SM community. This year's winner is Nancy Irwin. The Francis Robichaud Award is given "to an individual in Toronto's leather community who has consistently made contributions to Toronto's gay and lesbian community." Jack Mackness was named the FR Award recipient for 2003. The Claude Brazeau Award for "Volunteer of the Year" was presented to Gerry Geroux for his outstanding contributions to MLTC Inc.

MLT President and Chairman, Daddy John Burch, followed the



Community Awards with heartfelt thanks expressed to MLT Executive Producer, David Adkin, who will be stepping down

as Executive Producer of MLT when he completes his two-year commitment at the end of this year. David has also built the Mr. Leatherman Toronto Competition to what is now a world re-known event, having served as Producer of the Competition Weekend for seven years.

Following the Competition the Kool Haus venue was transformed into the Victory Ball. Making his Toronto debut, DJ Blaine Soileau will surly be asked for return engagement as he kept the crowd sweating to his high octane blend of soaring house vocals and big room anthems. Brent Storey lit-up-the-night with his spectacular lighting illusions.. The featured performer for the Victory Ball was Lena Love, whose

uninhibited performances have made her a hit around the world. The throngs of hot men in attendance found many options such as the VIP Lounge, the live "painting in progress" by Jay Dampf and the S/M demo performance by "Master R".

MLT 2004 Competition and Victory Ball were the main events of MLT Weekend with a total of thirteen official events held in nine venues over four days (Nov 27 - Nov 30). Full event listings are available at www.MrLT.com

For more information, images or interviews: please contact John Bassett, MLT Media Relations Coordinator at (416) 363-1259 or media@MrLT.com

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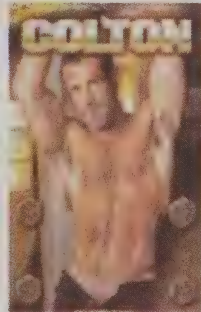
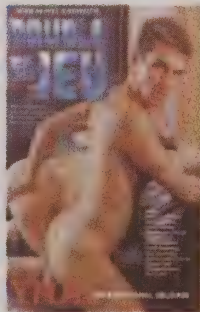
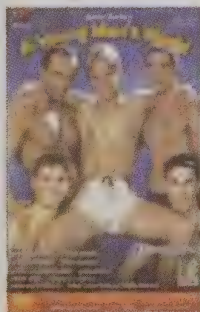
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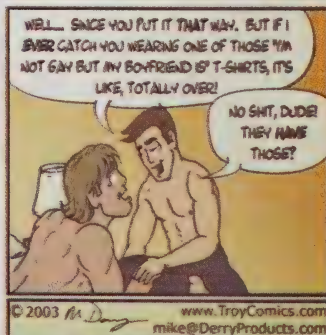
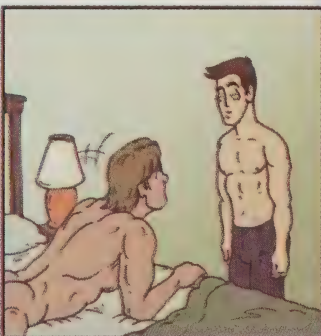
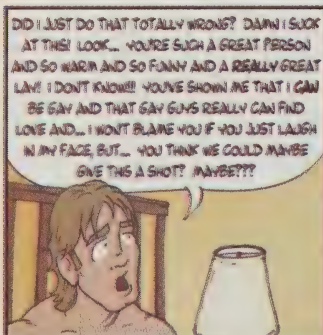
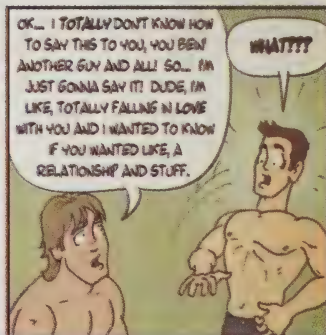
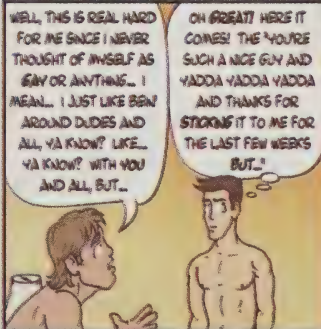
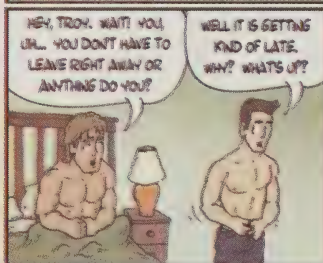
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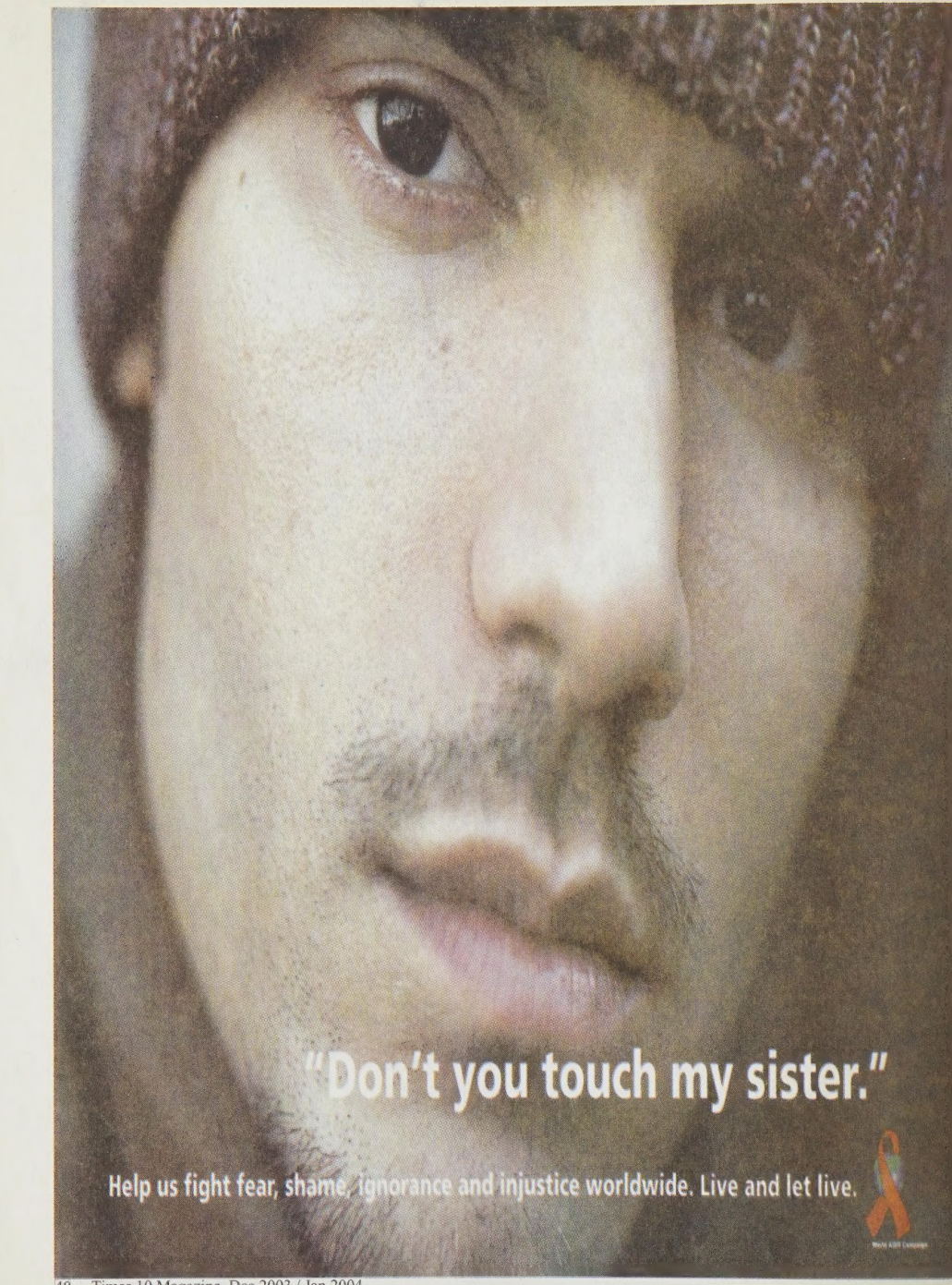
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